

Class Warrior

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The BART Strikes: Once again on the relevance and method of Trotsky's Transitional Program



Introduction:

Every strike potentially becomes a school for revolution and the two BART strikes of 2013 posed questions of revolutionary dynamics: how does the working class improve its position in a period of capitalist crisis and what worker democratic organizational forms and political program are needed to win the battle? These questions are provisionally answered by the Transitional Program. In this report we illustrate our differences with opponent political tendencies in the practice of the Transport Workers Solidarity Committee (TWSC). Much could have been learned, let's see who refuses to learn and why.

The workers' program cannot be reduced to slogans or bullet points. Yet when we raise it as an action program it is roundly derided by all variants of centrists and reformists as a "laundry list". The workers' program cannot be reduced to one point unless that point is the Socialist Revolution; which while correct in explaining what is objectively called for, does not take workers from their current backward consciousness to class political consciousness and the understanding of the need for and how to prepare for the Socialist Revolution. Those right centrists and reformists who adapt the workers program to the ruling class' desire for and need to keep our wages below the livable take the workers further away from preparing the class for revolution.

The Sawant campaign and centrists in the Bay Area like [Oakland Socialist Blog](#)¹ and [Facts for Working People](#)² blog argue for the anti-working class minimum wage instead of demanding that labor take

on the fight for Jobs for All and a livable wage-*a prevailing wage that labor defines- a demand which raises the questions of the sharing of work and shortening of hours with no reduction of pay and the sliding scale of wages and prices.* We are told by these centrists and their reformist friends that even doubling the minimum wage would be a great step forward for the workers and thus we should build the link of the organized to the unorganized by calling for labor to campaign for a new higher minimum wage. Yet they continue to peg that wage below the prevailing rate and thus below the living wage. To win the prevailing rate will take a mass struggle that unites the class, develops democratic workers organizations, develops the workers program and breaks from the Democrats. This is more than the right centrists and reformists have stomach for. So they meet labor where it is (in the hands of the Democrats) and spice up the minimum wage demand (either by calling for \$15 or \$20 and a minimum \$5 increase for all with pension and medical,) just so they can appear more radical than the Greens, who call for \$16.00 minimum, and the likes of Professor and former Labor Secretary Robert Reich, who is for a \$15.00 minimum, and thus put pressure on the unions and Democrats to do what they are in the process of doing already; raising the minimum wage to \$10 by 2015 in California.

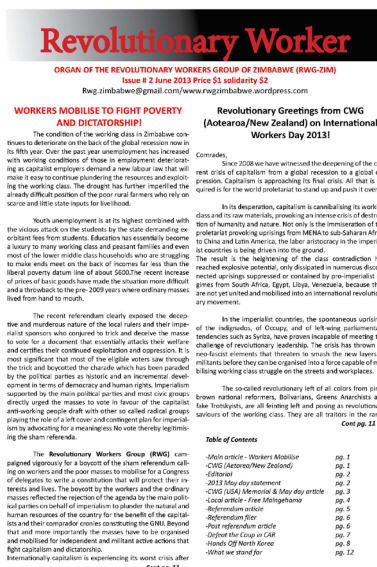
This fake attempt to mobilize the low wage workers for a sub-living wage has been used by the labor aristocracy to mobilize support for and pressure the Democrats. We even have one retired OEA "militant" here who admits that \$36 an hour is the living wage for the Bay Area but looks for a way to saddle the labor movement with a sub-living wage demand as the means to unite with the unemployed. These

labor fakers refuse to see that winning the most modest reforms is not possible without titanic political struggles during this period of renewed capitalist decay. Indeed they adapt to the Roosevelt era minimum wage which supplanted labors traditional fight for a living wage. Even the early AFL program “A fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay” is more germane to workers lives than the sub-living wage promoted by the Democrats, Greens, labor leadership, labor aristocracy and the reformists and centrist leaders who pose as revolutionary socialists.

Labor is shell shocked by the onslaught of the bosses. The decades old labor/management team approach and even limited strikes will not keep workers current with inflation. The crisis forces big capital to crush the workers movement and chip away at gains which were made by labor since WWII. The BART workers, as representative of all public workers, are targeted as the largest remaining unionized sector of the economy. Transit unions wield tremendous social power in the major metropolitan areas. The once powerful United Automobile Workers (UAW) is a shadow of its former self, while the ILWU longshoremen are under heavy attack. Wisconsin and Michigan, bastions of organized labor, have suffered heavy defeats. This must not continue! It is time to draw a line in the sand! The defeat engineered on the BART workers by the strong arm of the business “community,” the political class and with the union leaderships in tow represents a setback for the entire working class.

“To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one’s program on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour for action arrives – these are the rules of the Fourth International.”

**Leon Trotsky
The Transitional Program (1938)**



In every contract negotiation the class lines are drawn bare; the crisis of leadership of the working class, the complicity of labor’s leadership with the bosses, the lack of working class political independence and the degeneration of the Marxist left leave the workers without their own party and completely at the mercy of the bosses onslaught. Traditional craft and industrial unionism in America restrained and accepting of the restraints of laws like the Taft Harley Act, transferring hope from the self-mobilization of the workers in strikes and acts of class solidarity to a strategy of political subservience to the Democrats, has left far too many strikers alone on picket lines that do not stop scabs (the nurses), do not mobilize the class solidarity needed to win, and thus defeat after defeat is racked up, demoralizing the workers.

Despite ruling class [spin](#)³ that a BART strike would cost \$73 million a day, they directed Hock to provoke one anyway!

With malice toward all who dare interfere with the right to accumulate, the Veolia Corporation, whose tentacles are grabbing up public transit (and water) systems across the country and around the globe, acting in consort with the ruling class Bay Area Council ([BAC](#)),⁴ together made a start at preparing the ground for the [privatization of the jewel of the Bay Area](#)⁵, the BART public transit system. Veolia has Para-Transit contracts in the Bay Area, competes with AC Transit for riders from BART to the Oakland Airport and runs public transit systems for profit on 6 continents. So it should have come as no surprise that Veolia was standing by with hundreds of buses and drivers and a contract to drive BART passengers during the strike. Clearly, the BAC ensured Veolia it would profit both on the provocation and on the consequences of the BART strike.

Across the country Veolia provides privatization ‘solutions’ for public transits systems and then proceeds to degrade them and bust the unions. The Boston public school bus drivers launched a wildcat strike against Veolia in Oct., 2013, in response to the canceling of the workers’ contract with the city of Boston. Like in the Bay Area, strikers have been victimized. ***We say drop the charges against the Boston 5, restore the contract, defeat privatization!*** Workers need to know that negotiator for BART, Tom Hock, and Veolia were not engaged because he was the best negotiator BART could buy for \$399,000.00; rather, he was running an expeditionary mission for the ruling elites who sit with BART general manager Grace Crunican on the Board of Directors of the BAC. In conjunction with and on behalf of the BART directors and board he provoked a strike, more to antagonize and test the patience of the riding public than for reasons of the BART system’s financial solvency. The ruling class wants profit from public transit and Veolia and Hock have a record of making profits, a fact which [SEIU 1021](#)⁶ staffers researched thoroughly.

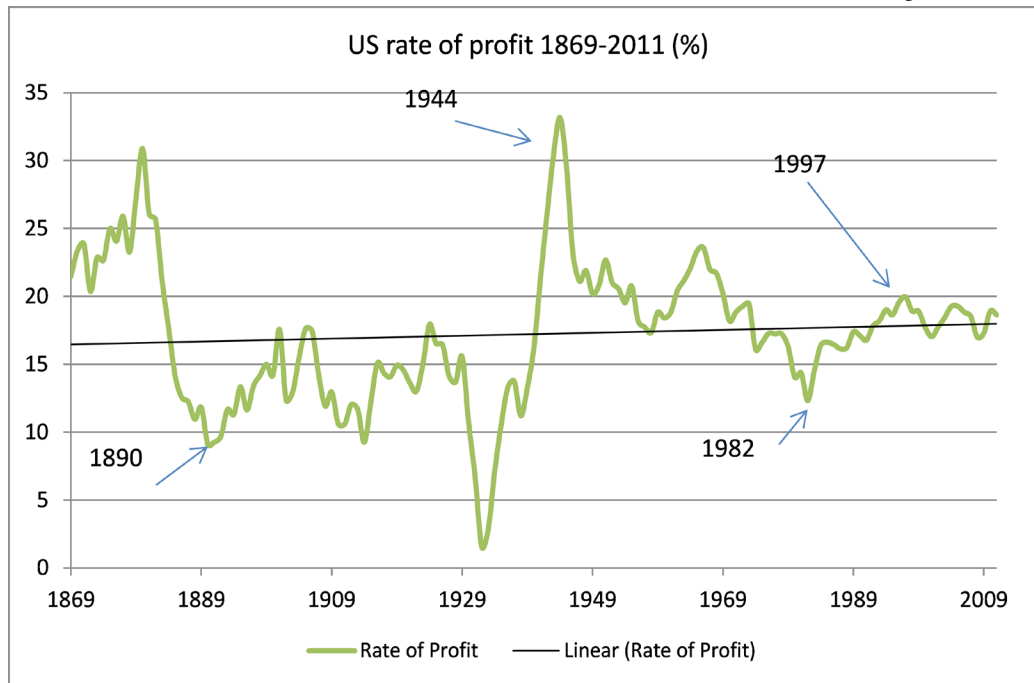
The Democrats stepped forward capitalizing on the public’s displeasure with the service interruption. Doing his masters bidding, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsome (product of the Getty billfold) scolded labor in no uncertain terms, and stated “This has got to be the last time this happens!” Alongside promised legislation to outlaw transit strikes and possibly all “essential service” workers strikes, and in consideration of attempts by Governor Brown and Mayor Reed (SJ-D) to destroy the public workers’ defined pensions, the hiring of Hock is another interlocking piece of the ruling class’ strategy to commodify everything, drive down the median wage, make the workers’ pay more for their pensions and trap those pensions in the financial services industry, while pushing more of the medical insurance costs onto the workers, all in order to restore profitability to capital.

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The crisis of the overproduction of capital has drawn vast reserves of otherwise idled capital into the privatization process. The tendency of the rate of profit to decline ([detailed by Roberts](#))⁷ puts pressure on individual capitals (whether held in trust or corporations) to maximize their rate of profit against the competition of all other capitals, which share among themselves the consequences of an ever-diminishing rate of profit:

individual capitals to accumulate profit (a share of the total social surplus value) from essentially not-for-profit enterprises, while at the same time socializing the costs and risks. Rather than creating new value, the privatizations in education and the public transit turns over public capital resources to private industry and guarantees profit to the privatizer, while mollifying those who disparage public works and services (Tea Party and “neo-liberal” ideologues).

US rate of profit 1869-2011



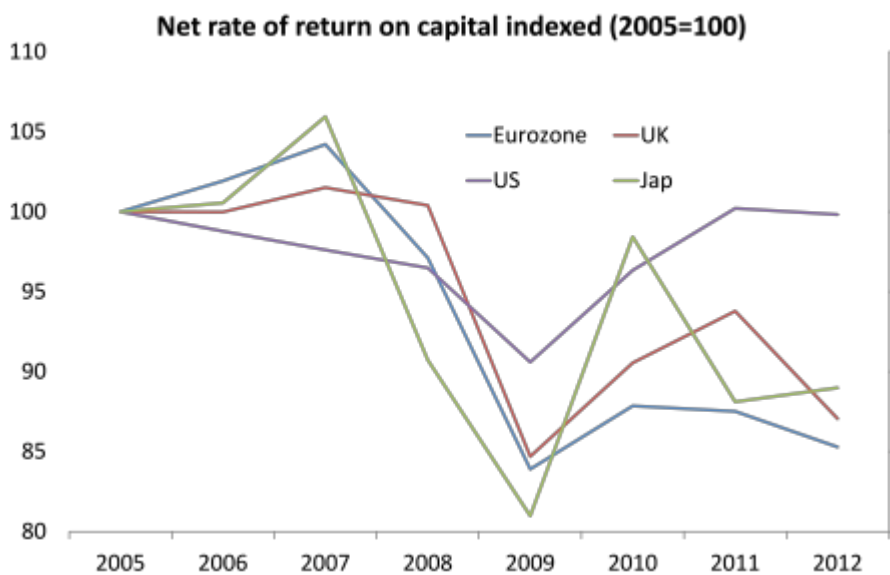
The BART Strike: A Key Battle for Labor

At the September 11th ATU Local 1555 meeting, apparently bolstered by the distribution of the Transit Workers Solidarity Committee (TWSC) leaflet, and despite a small turn out, the frustrated workers challenged local President Antonette Bryant for the leaderships' lack of communications about the negotiations and for not preparing the membership for the strike, which was being provoked actively by the BART negotiator. Unfortunately, a stirring of frustration in the rank and file had not resulted in a timely formation of a rank and file opposition caucus or broad-based strike committee.

Although supported by the TWSC, an organic rank and file opposition never coalesced around the handful of outspoken rank and file militants who explained how the leadership was acting to sink the strike preparations, how the leadership was refusing to

mobilize the membership and was making common cause with both the Democrats and management to prevent this thing from 'getting out of hand.'

Net rate on capital indexed (2005-)



The incursion of private capital into publicly run works as a business model has been described as privatization or “the commodification of everything.” This Hayekian/Randian⁸ dream-come-true allows

Two community/labor marches were organized and relatively well attended, as the routine model labor protests go. Each march, one in August and one in October, was attended by some 1500 workers and community supporters, far short of the massive gatherings the labor councils could muster if they were serious about setting the stage for victory. The control of the stage and microphone was in the hands of the union leadership, but under pressure from the community groups, Uncle Bobby (Oscar Grant's uncle) and an Alan Blueford family representative addressed the crowd. The representatives of the Mario Romero family from Vallejo were not included among the speakers. Not until strike leader George Figueroa spoke at the second rally, after being victimized by management and abandoned by the union leadership, did any union speaker call for a clean break with the Democrats and the formation of a Worker's Party. No wonder the leadership has abandoned this courageous strike organizer. ***The CWG calls for the complete restitution of Brother***

George Figueroa without further victimization, including all back pay, benefits and privileges! No peace for the leadership until brother Figueroa gets justice!



ATU strike organizer George Figueroa speaks at strike rally, calls for workers party.

[Rally Video](#)⁹

Throughout the struggle ATU Local 1555 made its office available to an ad-hoc support committee which served as an intersection between the union leadership and the community activists. Under the guidance of Local 1555 Recording Secretary Chris Finn, these forces came together to take up support of the strike. The resulting committee brought together activists from the Alan Blueford coalition, a number of left groups' activists and many of the same activists of the TWSC who were organizing strike support; groups like PSL, Solidarity, the Left Party, ANSWER, BAMN etc., et.al.

Neither the ad-hoc committee nor the TWSC attracted the rank-and-file BART workers. The rank and file was not looking for an outside or support vehicle to be active through. They were taking leadership from their organization, which was doing everything it could to prevent the mobilization of the memberships of the various unions in BART and AC Transit from coming together with other out-of-contract unions, the port truckers and the low wage workers in fast food and big box distribution centers, for united class-wide strike action. No mass or regular strike committee meetings would be convened. The leadership rightly gauged the sentiment of the rank and file as expressed by two rejections of the TAKE AWAY tentative agreements by the membership of their sister union, ATU Local 192. ***Tentative agreements the leadership had negotiated and tried unsuccessfully to sell to the AC Transit drivers.*** Fear of the growing frustration of the masses and with the logic of a united transit strike on everyone's mind, reinforced and kept the leadership on message, which was all conciliation and 100% obsequious in tone. As proof of their servility to big capital, the union leaders enforced gag rules over rank and file militants, throwing them off the negotiations committees because they fought the concessionary bargaining, fought for transparency, for community outreach and mass mobilization to bring the membership the truth about the leaderships' sellout perspective.

Reformism and the BART strike

The servility of the leadership to capital pinned by the strong arm of the Democratic Party has long been apparent. At an early summertime barbeque at Oakland's Mosswood Park prior to the strike, members of the three main unions met together but no organizing was discussed. Nor was any speakout organized to discuss how to win the upcoming struggle. Rather the leadership ushered in the local Democratic Party committeeman who praised the local leadership and promised that the

Democrats would be on the workers' side. Yet in the days leading up to the strike and for its duration the local Democrats and their Party leaders not only denied any support to the workers--and by the end of the struggle the entire power of the Democrats would be brought to bear on the workers--with Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom proclaiming "This has got to be the last time..." signaling that the growing unity drive of Republicans and Democrats alike to legislate against the right-to-strike for transit workers (and possibly essential workers) is near the top of the Democratic Party agenda. Friends of Labor? Who needs friends like these!

Hand in hand with the bosses, the labor movement's leadership held back the solidarity actions needed for the BART workers to win decisively. They could mouth the words, "A loss for BART workers is a loss for all workers..." but their role as management's enforcers assured they would not mobilize against the attacks on public workers. An AFSCME Local 444 delegate to the Alameda Labor Council argued that labor should ante up with full page advertisements in the bay area newspapers to counter the corporate media spin, but even ATU Local 1555 delegate Chris Finn opposed the recommendation, so labor gave up the media war without spending a dime!

The nicest thing you can say about the BART union leaderships of ATU Local 1555, SEIU Local 1021, and AFSCME Local 3993 is that they were not prepared strategically to protect or advance the compensation or conditions of their workers in this negotiation. Long in the pocket of the Democrats, the leadership had nowhere to turn when faced down by every significant Democrat from the mayors to the governor and President. The leadership quickly backed down from the demand for a commensurate COLA (to cover losses imposed in the previous contract,) and they quickly caved under the political and corporate media pressure on pensions and medical. All the while the membership was atomized and demobilized, watching their future being bargained away. The vacuum of leadership was becoming apparent and management smelled blood.

The long-term dependence on politicians, lawyers and the teaming with management had the effect of demobilizing and demoralizing the membership over many years. The memberships were never gathered for mass strike committee meetings to discuss and develop, of their own will, a fighting strategy! The memberships were of course polled but then demobilized and only called in for informational meetings and strike logistics planning (so unserious as to be a joke was the call-in opinion airing session organized by the leadership of ATU Local 1555 which provided scant mechanism to translate member's demands into negotiating positions.)

The union leaders were pressured on the one side by the union busters of the BART board, the Veolia Corporation and their commitment to the capitalist Democratic Party and on the other side by the workers' determination to make up for "sharing the pain" during the first years of the current crisis. This explains how the leadership stumbled reluctantly into and out of two strikes, "giving it away" at the negotiating table only to catch a 3% "hail Mary pass" tossed by management after the deaths of two scabs killed by management-run scab trains. With the end of the stimulus payroll tax relief on November 1st, this 3% will never appear in the workers envelope as money. In fact, that same 3% was sold as make-up for the new pension contributions. The union leaderships response to this manslaughter was a quasi-religious candlelight vigil. ***The CWG calls for a workers' tribunal¹⁰ to be convened by the labor movement to try those responsible for this crime!***

To avoid labor taking advantage of the changing public sentiment against management, and for fear that the strike might have spread to AC Transit, the Port Truckers and beyond, management kicked in 3% in order to “sweeten” the deal and prevent the anticipated “No” vote from the membership for the TAKE AWAY AGREEMENT, which was presented as the “Last Best and Final” offer on the table before the scab train accident. This “sweetener” also served as a “Get Out of Town Free Card” for Tom Hock, and his \$400,000 fee, which, despite the corporate media black-out, was becoming public knowledge, as was his role in stalling the talks and provoking the strikes.

The union leaderships recommended the membership accept this TA despite the fact that it did not catch up with nor will it keep up with inflation. The CWG consistently advocates **NO** votes on TAKE AWAY tentative agreements. The passage of this agreement is a setback for the BART workers, AC Transit workers and all other workers. In preparation for this defeat, a cast of characters, from the union locals on up to the international unions and across all the “legitimate” organs of labor, including its many self-styled socialist champions, particularly those of the economist persuasion, all took special to make certain that nary a finger would be raised to assure a worker victory.

The enemies arrayed against the Transitional Method: Centrism in the labor movement

This section serves both as expose and response to the various parties involved and a guide to a number of debates which took place among workers organizing support for the BART workers struggle.

In early September the TWSC as a group was searching for a bridge to link the marginalized and slave wage workers of the precariat, fast food and Wal-Mart etc., into united action with the BART workers. While the bosses’ judges and politicians were working overtime issuing injunctions and cooling off periods, militant labor activists were looking for the road to unleash the might of the workers in the “Perfect Storm” of united strike action which would turn the tide. Some solidarity was developed out in the street by TWSC and by various labor activists and Occupy, who had joined in the multiple actions organized in the last year around the [“Fight for \\$15”](#), the Wal-Mart protests, the [American Licorice](#) strike (facing down strike breaking thugs), the Mi Pueblo organizing drive, the AirPort of Oakland fast food workers strikes, and the [Castle Wood](#) Country Club strike, among others (see also [Daily Kos](#)).¹¹

The TWSC agreed on the need for a statement and leaflet to build solidarity in action between the low wage workers, BART and AC Transit workers. A Draft leaflet written by JR and JG made reference to raising the minimum wage to \$15 in an *opportunistic adaptation* to the already popularized Fight for \$15 slogan (as follows)

“We should not only try to hold onto and improve what public sector workers (including BART and AC Transit workers) have; we should link this with a fight for all workers to win the same. We should fight for all workers to gain:

- **A \$15 per hour minimum wage (even that isn’t enough, but it’s a start) or an immediate \$5.00 per hour raise, whichever is greater.**
- **A real pension plan, fully paid for by the employer.**

- **Real health insurance for all workers and their dependents, fully paid for by the employer.”**

We note for our readers that we had not participated in the TWSC in the past except to march next to their banner on occasions, to participate in their forums, and in this case a member forwarded the draft leaflet to us. While it lingered on their discussion group for days, we considered that there is another way to mobilize the slave wage workers than to advocate for labor to abandon its traditional demand for prevailing wages, to **NOT** opportunistically adapt to the demands advanced by the Democrats and Greens. We reprint **our** letter to the TWSC below, which we offered to them to contrast with their proposed leaflet.

(Sent: Wednesday, September 11, 2013 10:34 PM)

“Comrades,

This discussion is about how a support committee can help the rank and file reach past the labor bureaucracy in order to make common cause with the ‘precariat’, minimum wage workers, and riders of transit whom the corporate media propagandizes to everyday. The poorly paid and the highly paid alike are bombarded with the bosses ideology in order to get them to dismiss transit and public workers as overpaid for the work we do. We know they do this in order to keep the union rank and file from finding support for our fight for improved contracts. In order to overcome the bosses ideology and its effects on other workers and the oppressed we have to show that, at least the vanguard of the public workers (like fighters in the TWSC) are mobilizing the rank and file, can see past and don’t capitulate to, the parameters (...) that are ‘acceptable’ demands set for the poorly paid by the reformists and economists.

Just because the movement of the minimum wage workers has yet to escape the clutches of established reform organizations, which set \$15 as a demand which acts objectively only to pressure the Democrats to sign a \$10 minimum wage legislation, does not mean that rank and file solidarity committees have to sign on to their reform strategy (even as we sweeten the deal with a call for an over all \$5 boost, medical and pension). In order to build class solidarity and a united action plan we have to say the truth. We have to say \$15 is not enough! End poverty now! We can support their struggle but not accept the limits its nascent leadership has suggested.

We can tell the starvation wage workers that only when there are ‘Jobs for All!’ (willing and able workers) can poverty be abolished. We can say the labor tops are busy playing footsie with the Democrats but the rank and file of organized workers join with you to fight for all your wage and benefit demands!

But as unionized workers we know that \$15 per hour will barely lift some of you up from misery into the elevated status of poverty (to borrow a concept from the reformist Haitian ex-President Aristides), but not out of poverty itself. Therefore we (the TSWC) fight in our unions and alongside all organized workers to lift everyone out of poverty.

To do so we call on our unions, the unorganized and the newly organized to fight for Jobs for All at prevailing union wages with vacations, pensions, sick days and medical insurance.

But we also know that capital thrives on and perpetuates the existence of unemployment, the threat of poverty and of being replaced by lower paid workers keeps millions of workers from fighting back against 'take back' contracts, cuts at work and in social services and against brutal working conditions. Our committee sees that both the organized and the unorganized are used against each other by capital and we also see that we can overcome that separation by fighting jointly for jobs for all by shortening the work day with no reduction in pay.

Thus 30 hours work for 40 hours pay is not some abstract rhetoric for "out-anti-capitalisting" each other with anachronistic slogans but is a bridge to take the workers from their subjective desire for basic reform (better wages) to the objective necessity for workers power (control over hours, wages and prices) in order to win such gains.

We all know that the major reform organizations will pack up and go home after the next minimum wage revision is signed into law. We also know it will take a ground swell to force organized labor to dedicate resources to organizing the unorganized. And we know that \$15 per hour, let alone a decent wage, medical, pensions, sick days and vacation days will only be won by massive mobilizations of the workers and a united revitalized labor movement.

Such a mobilization must aim to unite the class, break the media monopoly over the consciousness of workers and oppressed, challenge the practices of the entrenched labor leaders (by promoting job-site action committees, inter-district committees, inter-union committees, strikes, job site occupations, general strikes and political strikes which answer to the needs of the most oppressed communities-i.e. Oct 23rd Oscar Grant/ILWU action) and thus consciously drives the wedge of political independence between labor and the Democrats.

Capitalism itself sparked the fire our job is douse the flames with gasoline and not pose or accept uncritically demands which (like \$15 per hour minimum wage) barely lift workers from misery and up into poverty. To do otherwise we run the risk of becoming a not so left-adjunct to the class collaborationists running the labor councils.

The change I propose is that the leaflet uses the slogans: \$15.00 is not enough! Prevailing wages and union benefits for all! Public & transit workers, unite with low wage workers and unemployed to build solidarity strikes to win our contract demands, defend targeted workers and to win Jobs for All! Share the work with no reduction in pay! An injury to one is an injury to all!"

The ABC necessity to unite with low wage workers and launch a common struggle was agreeable to us naturally enough, but we found the method of adapting to the minimal demands (even with the

qualifications of plus \$5, a pension and medical insurance,) to be a capitulation to the reformists who keep the workers demobilized in a number of ways.

First, this method of "reaching out" with a "concrete" and presumably "winnable" and "reasonable" demand, while it almost doubles today's starvation wages leaves the masses working for the new improved minimum in poverty.

Second, variations of the \$15 minimum wage are being promoted by sectors of the ruling class and small capitalist parties like the Greens, who call for a minimum wage of \$16+ as well as pro-capitalist economists like Robert Reich and Paul Krugman, who, as adherents to Keynesianism and the underconsumptionist theory of crisis, argue a solution to the stagnant economy lies in giving the millions of low wage workers a little more, just enough to help kick-start the economy. This is based on the false theory embraced by the likes of JR (Oakland Socialist Blog) that the tendency toward the overproduction of commodities, rather than the overproduction of capital (and thus the tendency of the rate of profit to decline,) is the cause of the crisis and can thus be mitigated with (as Krugman and Reich promise) a small rise in the minimum wage.

Third, this abandons even the labor movement's traditional, albeit conservative, demand (conservative Marx points out because it does not call for the abolition of the wage system,) for a "fair days pay for a fair days work," the corollary of which is that the minimum wage must be raised up to the prevailing wage, not vice versa. No doubt a fight for \$15, or for a shorter work week or for pensions and medical insurance will not be won without a higher degree of activity and consciousness than we have today. Indeed, that is what we are trying to provoke with our demands.

Consider the catastrophic understaffing and unsafe and staggering overtime which BART management has imposed that resulted in a media frenzy berating workers for collecting their overtime pay; **the question of the length of the workweek is therefore highly relevant to both the overworked at BART and the unemployed and under-employed in the community.** This was the center of our criticism of the TWSC Draft leaflet. We did not call for a 'solid number.' No, but rather for a struggle for *Jobs for All, which would challenge the bosses' squeeze play by calling for a shorter workweek and no reduction in pay.* In our own proposed [Draft Leaflet](#)¹² we raised the demand for a sliding scale of wages and prices to assure wages defined by the workers themselves, through the formation of labors' own wage and price committees. We presented it to the meeting and later distributed this text to BART and AC Transit workers in our own name. It was this demand and the demands for self-organization that got the centrist TWSC leaders' shorts all twisted.

A retired Oakland teacher JG wrote in response to our statement as follows on 9/11/2013:

"First, on minimum wage:

The fact is, \$20 an hour (\$40,000 / year) is inadequate. We're for a living wage. In fact, we're really for elimination of the wage system altogether, aren't we? I see this as the question of how to fight for reforms. \$15 / hour is just a start -- we support the movement for it as a first step, but need to say that it's not enough and is just the first step. (By the way, Charles R. and I had the same

difference last winter when a militant movement of South African farmworkers in the Cape region were demanding a minimum wage that would have been a big pay increase. So: if the flyer isn't clear enough, then it needs to be made clearer: We call for supporting the movement for an immediate increase of minimum wage to \$15 / hour, but say we all know that's not enough and onward to a real living wage (which would be more like \$36 / hour, but we need not specify a figure)...."

JG is caught in the classic minimum/maximum demand conundrum. He knows that \$15 is not enough and bantered back and forth with JR on whether to sell the workers short with \$15+\$5, or \$20 + \$5, settling on JR's initial formula, all the while knowing that the objective conditions, the economic conditions we live in, make \$36 the actual living wage, which is indeed close to but still below the mean prevailing wage in the Bay Area today. In the end, JG retreats from the necessity of putting a number on the leaflet at all, throwing up his hands after admitting that \$36 is the real anti-poverty number and saying we don't have to put a figure on it anyway.

Why, we have to ask, were JG, the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT), and other militants afraid of raising the demand for what is objectively necessary to help lift workers out of poverty—the prevailing wage for all? JG of course lets us know that he read Marx too, and that in order to end poverty we must abolish the wage system, which we agree is objectively necessary, but which JR and JG will be the first to remind us is not currently being advocated by the workers. Instead of finding a bridge from where the workers are now to assist labor in arriving at the understanding of the need for the abolition of the wage system, he seeks in vain for a minimum wage number he is comfortable with advancing. Is it because the ruling class and labor leaders will scoff at the thought of a living wage that essentially quadruples the minimum wage? But the point is they did pick a number and it's not the number that can lift workers out of poverty and they expect this demand to be the bridge to link the most oppressed and exploited to the struggles of those who make four times their current slave wage; but these workers are not guided and inspired either by their union leaders, or by JG, JR, et.al., to fight for the prevailing wage to be extended to all! Even *consistent* Gompersites (long missing from the labor movement) would call for the prevailing rate to prevail! The TWSC rejected adaptation to a minimum wage demand, called for a living wage, but still did not embrace the method of the Transitional Program as appropriate for the leaflet.

Another long time supporter of the TWSC, PT, suggested that the Fight for \$15 demand is the demand of the people themselves and therefore should be supported. His statement sent us on a search to find out more about the demand for \$15 and what it really meant. After our research we responded:

(September 15th)

"Comrades,

...Peter commented that the \$15 demand was the demand of the workers not the bureaucrats or the academics or driven by wings of the bourgeoisie. I have asked FF\$15 and NYCC on the origins of the demand they have not responded. I have not found the democratic origins of the \$15 demand. I looked far and wide for reference to

The Real Story of the Minimum Wage

We see every strike as a potential school of revolution and every picket line as a germ of the workers militia. For us the economic theory of any Transit Workers Solidarity Committee is not an idle interest. For any Transit Workers Solidarity Committee to be preoccupied with what the minimum wage should be is already a surrender to the Democrats and indicates that leading members do not really believe that the Democratic Party is the expression of the enemy social class. In the US, the minimum wage only dates from 1938. It has been a part of the program of the Democratic Party ever since, and signifies a ruling class agreement that the American Dream will not be for everyone, that for tens of millions of workers it will be permissible for the bosses to pay slave wages. On the plane of economic theory today we see the centrists carrying out a division of labor with the class collaborators at the head of the Alameda Labor Council and San Francisco Labor Council for whom the support for the Democratic Party and acceptance of the concept of the minimum wage are nowhere in dispute. Where the labor aristocracy sees the union leaderships' half-serious support for Fight For \$15 as progressive, we take our stand on the fight for prevailing rate and Jobs for All and Union Wages for All, whether employed or not. It is not on the working class that the burden of unemployment must fall. For the survival of the one revolutionary class we call for union wages for all thus, preoccupation and obsession with any "minimum wage" is playing the class enemy's game!

a conference of low wage workers where the discussion was based. If someone knows when, where, who held a democratic discussion of the representatives of the low wage workers I would be interested in that information. I understand that it could have been a consensus that developed when one small group raised the sign for \$15 or even when someone put it on FB but even that story is elusive. If you have that information please forward it.

I have found many organizations that are tying the FF\$15 movement of the low wage workers to their orientation to the Democratic Party. See the attached picture which uses the Democratic Party logo in hamburger form from an activist group NYCC which promotes and organized FF\$15. I have found many references to SEIU President Mary Kay Henry, who we all know ties the hands of labor to the Dems and avoids indefinite strikes like the plague, and has guided SEIU in supporting the FF\$15.

I have even found wings of the bourgeoisie both big and small (see links below) who support the Henry Ford argument that workers must be paid enough to buy the products of their labor as reason for calling for \$15.

There is also large wing of the millions of small business owners who pay better than \$15 per hour and want the lower end wages brought up in order to squeeze out their low wage paying competitors who currently squeeze their profits.

So when we consider this discussion the class alignments on this issue it is not as simple as underpaid workers vs.

big box stores and fast food franchises. There are layers of small capitalists, ruling class ideologues and sell out labor tops who make common cause with FF\$15 as long as it does not break with the Democrats, or get too far ahead of what “egalitarian” small business owners are willing to pay.

Of course the AFL-CIO is worse than the SEIU on this question as witnessed by the unholy alliance of Dem’s and Labor which pushed a three year phase-in of the new minimum wage in CA.

To reiterate we understand and do not condemn the low wage workers for raising \$15. Indeed we stand with them and will fight for all the demands they strike out for no matter how insufficient they may be.

Rather we think that our job (as a solidarity committee) is not to embrace what the low wage workers think is ‘reasonable’ but from the elevated position of being ‘prevailing wage workers’ to close the gap between the minimum wage (and proposed minimum wage) and living wage which elevates people out of poverty. We believe that any wage that leaves a worker in poverty is a crime of abusive exploitation against the class as a whole. An injury to one is an injury to all! Raising the slogan “\$15 is Not Enough” does not challenge the workers who ask for \$15 it challenges the bourgeoisie and their lackeys academia and in labor who seek to limit the minimum wage or use the campaign to win \$10 by 2018.

See the links below and the charts attached.

In [NYC activist organizations](#) on the ground that tie the movement ...one day strikes and the whole \$15 package to the Democratic party....for their recommendations in last week(s) Democratic Primary click here: <http://www.nycommunities.org/blog> and those “leading” [the fight for \\$9](#) also are pushing the dependence on the Democrats.

<http://mariopiperni.com/economy/would-a-15-minimum-wage-work.php>

Great Keynesian argument for \$15

“We support the workers demand for \$15 an hour and want to hear from the most profitable multinational companies in the world, why not?” said SEIU President [Mary Kay Henry](#) on *Jansing & Co* Monday. <http://tv.msnbc.com/2013/08/05/seiu-backs-15-an-hour-minimum-wage/>

\$15 it appears is profitable in [Australia](#) “...It’s also possible that McDonald’s keeps its prices down overseas by squeezing more productivity out of its workers. ... Janney Capital Markets, which estimates that labor makes up 26 percent of all expenses for an average McDonald’s franchisee.” <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/08/the-magical-world-where-mcdonalds-pays-15-an-hour-its-australia/278313/>

The [right wing](#) argue layoffs are consequences of minimum wage hikes as share holders demand profits

and customers are not ready to adjust to price hike. <http://www.foxbusiness.com/on-air/stossel/blog/2012/07/13/australian-minimum-wage-myth>

To which the [Neo-Keynesians](#) argue the exact opposite...

<http://mediamatters.org/research/2013/02/15/the-minimum-wage-myths-amp-facts/192692>

Both viewpoints of the ruling class are confirmed in this Tim Worstall polemic against the NYT, Media Matters and Nick Hanauer of Bloomberg under the [Forbes](#) banner last week: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/timworstall/2013/09/01/the-absurdity-of-a-15-minimum-wage/>

The two forked tongue of the capitalist “think tanks” and corporate media reinforces the necessity of advancing the 30 for 40 and the sliding scale of wages and prices. Business knows profit will be squeezed they will push on productivity push on prices and find their profitable price point unless the workers fight back and win control over wages and hours. To say any less is to hide the truth from the workers.

Comradely,
Charles R”

One after another the militants around the TWSC explained themselves.....

An International Bolshevik Tendency supporter in the TWSC wrote us:

“My organization stands on the Transitional Program (TP) written by Trotsky.

Certain things in the TP revolutionaries generally agree on. For example, the sliding scale of wages and hours. In the labour movement that usually gets explained as “30 for 40” i.e. 30 hours work for 40 hours pay and it seems to me that people generally accept that this is a revolutionary demand.

But there are demands in there that only seem to be applicable to situations in which the working class has a much higher level of independent organization than it currently has. The one I have the most trouble with happens to be exactly the one which Charles is calling for - the “committee on wages and prices” which would attempt to set wages apart from the capitalist class and in defiance of it....”

The CWG disagrees. As far as wage and price committees, Trotsky in the transitional program explains:

“The official struggle of the government with high prices is only a deception of the masses. But the farmers, artisans, merchants, in their capacity of consumers, can step into the politics of price-fixing shoulder to shoulder with the workers. To the capitalist’s lamentations about costs of production, of transport and trade, the consumers answer: “Show us your books; we demand control over the fixing of prices.” The organs of this control should be the *committees on prices*, made up of delegates from the factories, trade

unions, cooperatives, farmers' organizations, the "little man" of the city, housewives, etc. By this means the workers will be able to prove to the farmers that the real reason for high prices is not high wages but the exorbitant profits of the capitalists and the overhead expenses of capitalist anarchy."

Both the IBT supporter and JG argued against raising the transitional demand that organizes workers wage and price committees for determining what a living wage would be in 2013. Like JR they insinuate that Trotsky's program is an anachronism fit for "holiday speechifying" and not the summary of the experience of the workers movement and its concrete revolutionary answer to the crises of capitalism in our epoch.

In [discussions on the Transitional Program](#)¹³ Trotsky called it an "Action Program" and [further said](#):

"It is a program for action from today until the beginning of the socialist revolution."¹⁴

SW called our adherence to the Transitional program "Talmudic" and we would counter that it is dynamic and like Trotsky we would say the Transitional program is incomplete and in a sense never completed and we struggle to make it more complete and to more satisfactorily address the current conditions of our social class. Our current conditions are more like the second depression year of 1938 than any of the post WWII boom years that produced the consciousness of the labor aristocrats and the labor fakers our centrists placate and adapt to.

SW, who voted for the JR & JG- proposed leaflet demands cited above, explained to us that workers actually live on the minimum wage and that doubling it would be a great step forward. When challenged in writing that he advocated the sub-living minimum wage, he claimed we misrepresented his position, and if we did we apologize. However, SW's vote bears out his viewpoint, as does his objection to the transitional method.

The crux of SW's viewpoint as regards the transitional method was raised in an e-mail to us where he stated, "...you raise demands that are not remotely possible in this period..." This is the same criticism that has been leveled at the method of the Transitional Program and before that at the method of the early Communist International by generations of impeccably pragmatic reformists and centrists alike. Indeed Trotsky had many discussions on this very subject with the leaders of the early SWP. SW suggests our reference to the method of struggle developed in the Transitional Program is "Talmudic." Others with claims to socialist and anti-reformist working class leadership tell us outright to adapt to the demands of the workers.

In 1938 Trotsky answered SW's viewpoint in this way:

"The program must express the objective tasks of the working class rather than the backwardness of the workers. It must reflect society as it is and not the backwardness of the working class. It is an instrument to overcome and vanquish the backwardness."

And also see "[On the Transitional Program](#)":¹⁵

"...Our Program Must Fit Objective Situation

Everywhere I ask what should we do? Make our program

fit the objective situation or the mentality of the workers? And I believe that this question must be put before every comrade who says that this program is not fit for the American situation. This program is a scientific program. It is based on an objective analysis of the objective situation. It cannot be understood by the workers as a whole...."

Reformists and Centrists embrace the backwardness: The Fight for \$15!

The campaign for Fight for \$15 in , despite some energy displayed was not unlike the "Our Wal-Mart" campaign. The SEIU leadership oriented the workers toward the Democrats and not toward self-organization. One participant [reported](#):¹⁶

"This national organizing effort, led and funded largely by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and other affiliated non-profit community organizations has gained headlines since the first strikes occurred in New York City last year, and has spread to dozens of cities around the U.S. August 29th was the first such strike in action to occur in the Bay Area and was supposed to have involved up to 800 workers, according to the strike organizers."

"And it is clear that nowhere near 800 workers walked out in the Bay Area. In all likelihood no more than 300 or 400 people took part in the actions throughout the entire day and many of these people were union/nonprofit staff and their members."

"Again, maybe 100-200 people were present. Again, a "strike notice" was given to management and a brief rally was held in front of the store. Again, only one worker from the store appeared to be present. That one worker did give a rousing and moving speech to the crowd. However, that energy was quickly diffused by the following three speakers: two city council members and Mayor Jean Quan. Speaking with one of the organizers after the event, I was told that Mayor Quan wasn't even invited to speak but that one of the SEIU bigwigs insisted that they give her time on the mic. This was particularly saddening considering that Quan and her administration had not two months earlier forced SEIU members working for the City of Oakland to strike because the administration was not meeting their demands. After the rally a short march was held down Grand Ave., which was confined to the sidewalk by dozens of SEIU staffers in orange vests. Some younger participants noted how funny it was to see an Oakland protest NOT in the streets."

"The 'Fight for \$15' campaign is the newest front in the struggle for livable wages in Oakland." So says the [Workers World Party \(WWP\)](#)¹⁷ with whom we naturally enough disagree since we defend the Transitional program. Centrists today, when it really counts, just like the reformists, abandon the Marxist program to tail the union bureaucracy and to become the "best builders" of the movement. This amounts to a division of labor with the class collaborationist union misleadership. The Fourth International considered the main crisis within the workers movement to be the "crisis of revolutionary leadership." It is the duty of Marxists to "speak the truth" to the masses, to organize them and help them develop a political program to abolish capitalism, not to

simply do the work that the union bureaucracy will not or cannot do. In a recent article on the Port Workers struggle in the Bay Area, WWP has a photograph of the truckers picket line, but with signs whose slogans cannot be discerned.



Notice how the WWP photographer does not show what the signs said. These pictures were taken while the ILWU president was herding scabs past the picket line under police protection. The sign appropriately asked “ILWU which side are your on.” Look at what the signs actually say:



Not alone in abandoning a cornerstone of Trotskyism, the historical continuity of the Marxist method that traces its origins back to the Communist Manifesto, Socialist Alternative’s candidate for Seattle city council, Kshama Sawant, has embraced the \$15 slave wage demand. Socialist Alternative is the American sympathizing section of the Committee for a Workers International (CWI). As Seattle’s [*The Stranger*](#)¹⁸ pointed out:

“The truth is, despite her “Socialist Alternative” label and her unapologetically leftist perspective, there is nothing particularly radical when it comes to the core of Sawant’s councilmanic agenda. Sawant was advocating for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage a year ago, back before it was cool, before it was widely embraced by mainstream Democrats like US representative Adam Smith. As for the rest of her platform, at the risk of offending her, it is reasonable to say that on transit expansion, on building more affordable housing, on taxing the rich, on blocking coal trains, on expanding paid sick leave, on increasing civilian oversight of the police, and on many other issues, most of Sawant’s

policy positions fit comfortably within the mainstream of Seattle’s progressive values.”

This is **not** a break from the Democratic Party. As three Seattle anarchists wrote in a fairly [devastating critique](#)¹⁹ (which the CWG does not 100% agree with) of Sawant’s social democratic (i.e. liberal) , reformist economist campaign:

“The key demand the Sawant campaign has centered around is the \$15 minimum wage. It seems to be a reasonable proposal, but the reasons why Sawant wants to raise the minimum wage are a bit revealing. On the campaign website, [www.votesawant.org](#), there are multiple links to articles supporting Sawant’s \$15 an hour proposal. One of those links leads to a Bloomberg article, published June 19, titled “The Capitalist’s Case for a \$15 Minimum Wage”. This is very concerning, because Sawant is perpetuating yet another illusion; the illusion that struggle should take place only when workers and capitalists have unified interests. This is the same illusion that the Democratic Party represents. They support unions, as long as said unions stay within reasonable boundaries of what the bosses want. They support raising wages, as long as it might help the bottom line of some business.”

JR’s [Oakland Socialist Blog](#)²⁰ defends the Sawant campaign with [weak and ineffective refutation](#)²¹ of the anarchists:

“Not Perfect I am not saying that the Sawant campaign is perfect. There are some things that I think might be done differently. For instance, I think she should support the \$15 per hour minimum wage campaign but also say that it’s not enough, that we should fight for \$20 per hour minimum. (Maybe she does, I don’t know.) I also have some questions about the degree to which she and Socialist Alternative oppose the role of the hierarchy within the unions. (I should stress: These are merely questions.)

But those are secondary. I think the Sawant campaign overall has been a step forward for the working class, that it is overall helping raise the consciousness as well as the confidence of workers and young people in Seattle and that if she wins it would be a real breakthrough.”

The fight, to overturn the observed tendency toward the falling wage vs. rising profit share, in a market free fall induced by the Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Decline on one side and inhibited in volume by the decreased demand due to increasingly underpaid workers on the other side, for wage increases, is a futile race to the bottom, yet JR has to pick a dollar number to fight for, as in his recent switch from \$15+5 to \$20+5 (KPFA Workweek radio interview on 11/22/2013).

“Some Marxists, Roberts included, reject the theory of the tendency towards overproduction. They say that this theory simply leads to the view that capitalist crises can be prevented by keeping wages high enough. But Roberts, himself, has produced the evidence to refute that view. Higher pay will only cut even further into the rate of profit. On the other hand, boosting the rate of profit by cutting the wage bill – either through pay cuts or by layoffs – will cut into demand, thus crimping the economy in exactly the

Here JR misunderstands the crisis of overproduction as the *overproduction of commodities* as the result of insufficient demand. This is the familiar Baran/Sweezy theory of underconsumption or the wage-squeeze theory of crisis, which owes more to Keynes than Marx. That is why reformists and centrists who do not break with the Democrats call for wage increases as part of stimulating the economy into growth. The Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall (TRPF) in fact causes crises of *overproduction of capital* (which has to take commodity form obviously) even when workers are paid enough to buy commodities, and even when they are highly exploited. ***The cause of the crisis is not wage-squeeze or underconsumption but the inability of bosses to raise the rate of exploitation fast enough to return a profit on their total investment. To solve their crisis the bosses must attack workers, destroy the value of fixed capital and the value of the wage so as to reduce their costs to the point where they can again make a profit.***

Instead of being ‘damned whichever way,’ Marxists say that capitalists damn workers by demanding we pay for their crisis with our livelihoods and our lives. Our response to that is to say, “damn the bosses!” we create the value, we make their profits, we cannot survive unless we demand a living wage, and to win that, we will have to fight until workers see the necessity to expropriate the capitalist exploiters.

Forward to Workers Rule!

That is the point of raising demands based on our needs and not their (the bosses) pocketbooks. We do not take-back anything so they can solve their crisis and exploit us even more. By fighting for our basic demands in the unions and workers’ organizations we prove to ourselves that workers can and must take over the management and control of production and plan the economy to meet our needs and not their profits. In the case of the living wage and decent housing this is easily proven. These cannot be won without making the bosses’ crisis worse. That is our task: not to put up candidates for election to local, state or federal government (all under capitalist control) begging for legislation that will not bring down capitalism. Our task is to self-organize the whole working class, unionized, non-unionized, unemployed, Occupy, especially the most oppressed sectors of migrant, women and youth workers, etc. We need a fighting workers/labor party to fight for an action program that organizes workers struggle, workers self-defense and workers councils that are capable of creating a revolutionary movement to take power into the hands of a Workers Council Government to abolish this brutal system of wage slavery once and for all!

IWW: Not the Path to Workers Power

Along with anarchism, the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) is in vogue with many youth today. While we honor the early heroic struggles of the IWW, by the time of the Russian Revolution of 1917, they were no longer relevant as the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky answered the question as to what was necessary for the working class to take power. Their disdain for political program and focus on “direct action” exclusively revealed its bankruptcy recently during the Wisconsin struggle where their calls for a General Strike did not materialize. They were unwilling and unable to carry out a ***political fight for a workers political program*** against the Democratic Party and class collaborationist union bureaucracy that diverted the masses from class struggle into the losing Recall. Quite ironic that an IWW leading member in the TWSC would be worried about “out-left(ing) and out-anti-capitalist(ing) each other” and advocate accepting the \$15 minimum wage, given that the IWW is ostensibly for the “abolition of the wage system”. We will develop this analysis in a forthcoming *Class War*.

- 1 <http://oaklandsocialist.com/>
- 2 <http://weknowwhatsup.blogspot.com/>
- 3 <http://www.bayareacouncil.org/press-releases/bay-area-council-poll-shows-resounding-opposition-to-bart-strike/>
- 4 <http://www.bayareacouncil.org/press-releases/bay-area-council-poll-shows-resounding-opposition-to-bart-strike/>
- 5 <http://www.atu.org/work/privatization>
- 6 <http://www.seiu1021.org/files/2013/07/HockBusinessPracticesMemo.pdf>
- 7 <http://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2013/04/24/the-two-rrs-and-the-weak-recovery/>
- 8 Hayek and Rand two of the most consistent advocates of free markets and business solutions giving rise to an ideology which promotes the end to government regulation, programs and state enterprises.
- 9 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xe-fRUUitMo>
- 10 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RddVDGmb3-w&feature=share&list=UUMIgEJUyBXsO4ckVj3dYasw>
- 11 <http://eastbaysol.wordpress.com/2013/10/07/fight-for-15-and-the-fast-food-workers-strike-in-oakland/>
<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2013/04/29/1205642/-The-Fight-for-15-Comes-to-Oakland#>
http://inthesetimes.com/working/entry/13730/nlr_country_club_has_3.4_million_liability_due_to_illegal_lockout/
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nc-GNZVbrBI>
- 12 <https://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2013/09/21/18743594.php>
- 13 <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1938/tp/tpdiscuss.htm>
- 14 <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1938/tp/tpdiscuss.htm>
- 15 <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1938/tp/tpdiscuss.htm>
- 16 <http://eastbaysol.wordpress.com/2013/10/07/fight-for-15-and-the-fast-food-workers-strike-in-oakland/>
- 17 <http://www.workers.org/articles/2013/04/26/livable-wage-assembly-launches-fight-for-15-campaign-starting-with-may-day-action/>
- 18 <http://www.thestranger.com/seattle/the-case-for-kshama-sawant/Content?oid=17825832>
- 19 <http://warforquadranttwo.files.wordpress.com/2013/10/2013-10-20-kshama-sawant.pdf>
- 20 <http://oaklandsocialist.files.wordpress.com/2013/10/support-kshama-sawant.pdf>
- 21 <http://oaklandsocialist.com/2013/08/26/damned-if-you-do-and-damned-if-you-dont/>

What we Fight For

We fight to overthrow Capitalism

Historically, capitalism expanded world-wide to free much of humanity from the bonds of feudal or tribal society, and developed the economy, society and culture to a new higher level. But it could only do this by exploiting the labour of the productive classes to make its profits. To survive, capitalism became increasingly destructive of “nature” and humanity. In the early 20th century it entered the epoch of imperialism in which successive crises unleashed wars, revolutions and counter-revolutions. Today we fight to end capitalism’s wars, famine, oppression and injustice, by mobilising workers to overthrow their own ruling classes and bring to an end the rotten, exploitative and oppressive society that has exceeded its use-by date.

We fight for Socialism.

By the 20th century, capitalism had created the pre-conditions for socialism –a world-wide working class and modern industry capable of meeting all our basic needs. The potential to eliminate poverty, starvation, disease and war has long existed. The October Revolution proved this to be true, bringing peace, bread and land to millions. But it became the victim of the combined assault of imperialism and Stalinism. After 1924 the USSR , along with its deformed offspring in Europe, degenerated back towards capitalism. In the absence of a workers political revolution, capitalism was restored between 1990 and 1992. Vietnam and China then followed. In the 21st century only North Korea survives as a degenerated workers state. We unconditionally defend the DPRK against capitalism and fight for political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy as part of a world socialist revolution.

We fight to defend Marxism

While the economic conditions for socialism exist today, standing between the working class and socialism are political, social and cultural barriers. They are the capitalist state and bourgeois ideology and its agents. These agents claim that Marxism is dead and capitalism need not be exploitative. We say that Marxism is a living science that explains both capitalism’s continued exploitation and its attempts to hide class exploitation behind the appearance of individual “freedom” and “equality”. It reveals how and why the reformist, Stalinist and centrist misleaders of the working class tie workers to bourgeois ideas of nationalism, racism, sexism and equality. Such false beliefs will be exploded when the struggle against the inequality, injustice, anarchy and barbarism of capitalism in crisis, led by a revolutionary Marxist party, produces a revolutionary class-consciousness.

We fight for a Revolutionary Party

The bourgeoisie and its agents condemn the Marxist party as totalitarian. We say that without a democratic and a centrally organised party there can be no revolution. We base our beliefs on the revolutionary tradition of Bolshevism and Trotskyism. Such a party, armed with a transitional program, forms a bridge that joins the daily fight to defend all the past and present gains won from capitalism to the victorious socialist revolution. Defensive struggles for bourgeois rights and freedoms, for decent wages and conditions, will link up the struggles of workers of all nationalities, genders, ethnicities and sexual orientations, bringing about movements for workers control, political strikes and the arming of the working class, as necessary steps to workers’ power and the smashing of the bourgeois state. Along the way, workers will learn that each new step is one of many in a long march to revolutionize every barrier put in the path to their victorious revolution.

We fight for Communism.

Communism stands for the creation of a classless, stateless society beyond socialism that is capable of meeting all human needs. Against the ruling class lies that capitalism can be made “fair” for all, that nature can be “conserved”, that socialism and communism are “dead”, we raise the red flag of communism to keep alive the revolutionary tradition of the Communist Manifesto of 1848, the Bolshevik-led October Revolution, the Third Communist International until 1924, and the revolutionary Fourth International up to its collapse into centrism, with the closing of the International Center. We fight to build a new Communist International, as a world party of socialism capable of leading workers to a victorious struggle for socialism.

Join us:

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Email: rwg.zimbabwe@gmail.com

Website: www.rwgzimbabwe.wordpress.com

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